

This letter was also written for a newspaper. It would be useful chiefly in those instances when a news story or editorial does not indicate that many scientists disagree with charges that smoking causes lung cancer, or does not say that smoking is just one of many things being investigated.

To The Editor:

A casual reader of your news item of (date) about cigarette smoking would get the impression that smoking has been proved to be a cause of lung cancer.

As you should be aware, this is not the case -- even though the charge is often repeated.

The charge is usually based on interpretation of statistical studies. While such studies can be quite valuable in pointing up areas to be studied, statistics cannot provide proof of the causes of disease.

Dr. Joseph Berkson, chief statistician of the Mayo Clinic, recently said: "I don't think we have found any connection between smoking and lung cancer. There are too many complicated inter-relationships bound up with everything."

Dr. Berkson also said the statistical studies on smoking and lung cancer reflect "basic inaccuracies and biases."

As of now, scientists do not know what causes lung cancer, or any other kind of cancer. Many things are being studied. The U.S. Public Health Service alone is supporting \$5.6 million worth of research in 1961 to find out if viruses are a cause of human cancer.

Among the other areas being studied are air pollution, the constitutional and psychological differences among people, diet and previous lung infections. In other words, smoking is just one of many things being studied.

Newspaper readers should keep these facts in mind when reading the opinions of individuals.

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